



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

January 4, 2011

Mr. Jerry Johnson
General Manager
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
14501 Sweitzer Lane
Laurel, MD 20707

Dear Jerry,

The recent reports of hexavalent chromium in the drinking water in Bethesda were surprising. The Environmental Working Group believes that Bethesda's levels of hexavalent chromium exceed the .06 ppb standard that California is considering for its public health goal and I believe this is a cause for concern.

I understand that the WSSC is meeting all federal standards for the safety of drinking water. Nevertheless, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson recently stated that

"As a mother and the head of EPA, I am still concerned about the prevalence of chromium-6 in our drinking water. Today, I am announcing a series of actions that the EPA will take over the coming days to address chromium-6 in our drinking water. It is clear that the first step is to understand the prevalence of this problem."

Most importantly, EPA Administrator Jackson has offered to work with local jurisdictions identified in the EWG's report and I urge you to take every advantage of the EPA's offer of assistance.

It is my understanding that EPA will issue guidance to help develop monitoring and sampling programs specifically for chromium-6 and has offered technical assistance to the communities cited in the EWG report with the highest levels of chromium-6 to help ensure they quickly develop an effective chromium-6 specific monitoring program. Clearly, Bethesda and the WSSC should be included in these efforts.

I would ask that WSSC report back to me as to the feasibility of joining the monitoring effort for this pollutant and, if it is possible, to ascertain the source of this substance in our drinking water. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger Berliner".

Roger Berliner
Chairman
Committee on Transportation, Energy and the Environment